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FRANCE

I. Status and Strength of the Communist Party

In the National Assembly elections of 2 January 1956 the Communist Party (PCF) polled 5,492,326 votes or 25.6% of the total and won 149 seats (25%) in the Assembly. Its estimated membership is 250,000; its claimed membership is 430,000. In successive postwar elections the French CP has shown itself to be the largest single political party, with the main centers of its voting strength located not only in Paris and the industrialized north but also in rural areas of central France and those near the Mediterranean coast. The Communists control the largest trade union federation, the Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT), although its membership is now only approximately one million compared with roughly six million in 1947. Although events in Poland and Hungary caused losses in Party membership and activity, and increased dissension in the CGT during 1956, the Party can still play an important role in strikes for economic objectives as was shown by the general work stoppages which occurred in France in October 1957.

II. Party Units Responsible for Sabotage, Assassination, Kidnapping, or Terrorist Missions

The national headquarters unit responsible for the direction of aggressive acts of this nature has not been identified in France. A report of 1952 provided some detail about a secret apparatus organized by PCF headquarters which had ultimate paramilitary and sabotage purposes. This apparatus was divided into 14 inter-regions with a responsible, either a French CP or a CGT man, in charge of each inter-region. Under him were departmental and local responsables who were to form teams of specially selected men to engage in revolutionary action and sabotage when necessary.

Within the Communist-controlled CGT, the following components have been responsible for the direction of specific acts of aggression involving sabotage, terrorism, etc.: (a) the Confederal Bureau; (b) Federal Bureau of Miners; (c) local strike committees; (d) the Comité National d'Information et d'Action pour la Solution Pacifique des Problèmes d'Afrique du Nord.

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The execution of sabotage has been the responsibility of Communist-led groups of miners and other workers; and of groups of men of the Franc-Tireurs et Partisans Français (FTP), the resistance group which was active during the German occupation and which is now known as the Association Nationale des Anciens Combattants de la Résistance Française (National Association of Former Fighters of the French Resistance). The French CP underground section (apparently the appareil secret) and the Former Fighters of the French Resistance are to have important paramilitary and sabotage duties in the event of hostilities between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Railway sabotage has been committed by groups of train-wrecking crews consisting of men who had engaged in this action in the underground during World War II.

III. Training in Sabotage, Terrorism, etc. given in France

Training centers which had been in existence during World War II and which were still active in the immediate postwar period were found in the Landes Department in the southwest, in the Languedoc in the south, in Anjou in the west, and in the Somme in the north. An increase in activity at these schools was noticeable in 1947 during the wave of strikes. Members of these schools were reported to have been used in 1947 to handle a shipment of arms going to the Viet Minh. Soviet officers connected with the Soviet Repatriation Mission were reported to visit the schools. Yugoslav and Spanish citizens attended courses.

Three special PCF group courses were given in 1949 which included instruction in sabotage. Participating in the courses were FTPF, French CP and UJRF Union of Republican Youth of France (Union de la Jeunesse Republicaine de France) personnel. The first course, of eight days duration, was conducted at the Party headquarters in an unidentified town in central France. The ten students were forbidden to take notes on the course, which pertained to strategy and street fighting and which was conducted by "General Joinville" (Resistance title and pseudonym of PCF deputy Alfred Malleret-Joinville). They received instructions in the occupation of buildings, the construction of barricades, and attacks upon armored cars and upon police.

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The second course lasted five days; the instructors were General Joinville and a second instructor who was not identified. Street fighting techniques were taught and in addition the students received "theoretical training" on piloting and sabotaging an airplane, the protection of a parachute jump, the reception of a landing, the reception of airborne troops with study of the General Staff map. Several of the lectures stressed the theme of fanaticism, the acceptance of voluntary sacrifice and the giving of oneself to the cause of the working class.

The third course was given at a hotel near the Spanish border; the students spent ten days in France and six days in the mountains of Spain. They were instructed in the handling of weapons, group tactics, the use of all types of anti-tank weapons and in communication "exercises".

A report pertaining to French CP training activities of mid-October 1949 states that Party radio technicians were not only interested in the question of maintaining liaison between the various sections of the Party, but were also studying means of neutralizing the mobile radio units of the police forces if this should be opportune. Several CGT functionaries, including members of the CGT Mining Union, and officers of the FTPF were studying the possibility of constructing a transmitting station to be used to jam the frequencies used by the Police force.

IV. Training of French Communists in Communist Bloc Countries for Sabotage Action

No information pertaining to this subject is available.

V. Targets of Communist Sabotage, Assassination, Kidnapping, Terrorism

a. US Installations, Personnel (or U.S. Allies)

CGT-called dockworkers strikes caused delay in unloading of ships bringing European Recovery Program materials. In mid-August 1948 about 30% of the materials arriving at French

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ports was being held up by the strikes. In March 1950 there was a renewal of the Communist campaign to halt deliveries of U.S. arms which led to clashes between police and the Communist demonstrators. Communist disruptive parliamentary tactics which were carried out to prevent the enactment of anti-sabotage laws resulted in fighting and rioting at the French National Assembly.

The Communist Party instigated demonstrations and riots in 1951 and 1952 to protest visits of Generals Eisenhower and Ridgway. As a result of these acts more than 3,000 arrests were made (including in May 1952 the arrest of Jacques Duclos, then head of the French CP in the absence of Maurice Thorez.) Many civil servants and workers in military establishments were dismissed from government service for participation in these demonstrations, although membership in the French CP cannot be a cause for dismissal per se, under existing French laws.

b. Other Sabotage Targets

The following are selected examples illustrating typical action undertaken during periods indicated. Not all these actions, however, can be assigned to PCF planning, direction, or execution.

(1) Railway Sabotage

There were numerous instances of this action undertaken during strikes of the fall of 1947 and 1948 and in August 1953. In December 1947 an express train running from Lyon to Bourg was wrecked by the removal of spikes which loosened the rails. In August 1953 there were 20 cases of railway sabotage. The August 1953 strikes were not Communist-led, although the CGT joined the strike after it had begun.

(2) Public Utilities

Damage of or seizure of electric power stations

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occurred frequently during strikes of 1947 and 1948. During strikes of August 1953 there were twelve cases of sabotage of electric power stations or high tension wires.

(3) Industrial Sabotage

The French government estimated on about 1 December 1947 that 60% of French production was tied up by the strikes. During the serious strikes of the fall of 1948 which involved some 300,000 French miners, followed by railway workers, dockers, seamen and steel workers, mining equipment was destroyed either by using explosives or by letting machinery or equipment fall to the bottom of pits. Parts of the excavating machines were damaged; numerous thefts of gasoline, explosives and tools occurred. Several mine pits became flooded and rendered unusable for several months when the CGT Federal Bureau of Mines issued orders that mining maintenance and security teams should remain inactive.

(4) Attacks on non-Communists or anti-Communists

These were very frequent during the serious strikes of 1947 and 1948. During the latter, for example, official French statistics showed that 367 serious attacks on miners or their houses had occurred. There were also numerous cases of serious attacks on non-strikers during the spring of 1950 which resulted in many injuries and at least one fatality. In 1956 there were attacks on former CP members and against Poujadists in various localities.

(5) Local Insurrections

The Communists took over control of some towns by force during the strike action of 1947--for example, at St. Etienne, an armament-producing center near Lyon, and at Arles, near Marseille.

(6) Sabotage of Shipyards

CGT labor agitators instigated disruptive action at the

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St. Nazaire shipyards in May 1957 resulting in the systematic destruction of telephone switchboard equipment, burning of the plans library, etc.

(7) Sabotage of French Government Action in Algeria

Reports of this type of Communist sabotage indicate that over-all direction is provided by the French CP's expert on colonial matters, Leon Feix (also a member of the Party's Political Bureau and Central Committee). Immediate direction for FCP assistance to the national movement in Algeria appears to be the responsibility of the CGT (see II. above). Under the sponsorship of the CGT film sessions were organized and films were shown to "North African militants" (it is not clear whether this meant North African Communists, trade union workers or fighters of the National Liberation Forces of Algeria). CGT funds were used to purchase a farm where explosives could be made and which also served as a command post.

VI. Evidence of Direction and Support from the USSR, China or Other Communist Country

a. Several articles calling for increased use of aggression which were specifically related to France appeared in the Cominform Journal, particularly during the period of strike action in 1947-1948.

b. The French government claimed to have knowledge of a special directive from Andrey A. Zhdanov, key Soviet delegate at the 1947 Founding Conference of the Cominform, to the French CP stating that no matter what the outcome of the international conference then going on in Moscow, "the struggle against the Marshall Plan must be pursued without relaxation."

c. Financial aid for aggressive strike action was brought into France during 1947-1948 by agents of Communist Bloc countries. The French government arrested and expelled several of these.

d. [REDACTED] has stated that funds

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from his former service were supplied to the French CP for the 1948 strikes.

IX. Estimate of Threat from Local Communist Party Sabotage, Terrorism, etc.

In forming an estimate of possible danger from Communist sabotage, terrorism, etc., in France, the considerable decrease in popular support for both the Party and the CGT should be considered. Laboring groups are willing to support actions which are genuinely of an economic nature but are not willing to give broad support to Communist strikes and demonstrations and other aggression of purely political nature.

In response to a Soviet global call for increased aggression, the French CP would undoubtedly try to respond by stepping up labor agitation and accompanying acts of sabotage and violence. Also, in the event of an outbreak of hostilities, clandestine French CP and CP-controlled former resistance groups exist (at least in nucleus) which would go into action. Communist penetration into most areas of government and industrial activity constitutes a continuing French CP asset for aggression and sabotage action.

Without specific direction from abroad, the French CP and CGT will probably continue to hold in check aggression and sabotage action; they will exploit any genuine grievances of worker groups in order to regain the broad support within these groups which the Party and the CGT enjoyed in the immediate postwar period. Hence, any aggressive act which would be interpreted by workers as proof of the French CP's desire to promote their welfare, may be committed in the future, but in general the Party will probably refrain from acts which will cause further loss of strength and support for the Party or cause official retaliation.

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